Fiona Setch

The Art of Interview Skills

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The Art of Interview Skills

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About the author

Who was it that said “Life’s a bitch and then you die!”?

Fiona Setch’s motto for life is very different: Carpe Diem – Seize your day!

And that is exactly what Fiona Setch assists people to do.

Having had a successful first career in Nursing, specialising in caring for people who were dying, Fiona is passionate about helping people reach their potential in life and especially enjoyment in work.

With twenty years of experience of designing & delivering inspiring and innovative learning strategies for individual clients, as well as within Public Sector, Corporate and Educational Sectors. Fiona provides high quality development opportunities tailored to the needs of the organisation, team and individual.

Fiona is renowned for her enthusiastic, inspiring and motivational delivery style as a coach, trainer and public speaker.

Fiona also enjoys writing and has had several articles about Providing Staff Support, Motivating individuals and teams, preparing yourself for Interviews published within Professional journals including Audiology News, Hospital Doctor, Coaching at Work. Fiona is also a certified Myers Briggs Personality Indicator Practitioner, NLP Practitioner, Coaching Supervisor and Accredited Fireworks Career Coach.

Specialties include:
Injecting enthusiasm wherever she works, Fiona Setch creates a positive learning environment using brain friendly learning and is passionate about helping people develop. Designing pragmatic development solutions that meet the needs of the organisation, team and individual.

Fiona is passionate about providing support strategies for people in their work; this includes Action Learning Sets, Critical Incident Review, Individual and Group Supervision, Training activities and Coaching.

Fiona is particularly successful at assisting people develop their interview skills to get the jobs that they want. This is through a combination of Presentation skills training and coaching. This can be face to face, by Skype or telephone.

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Interview skills Client Testimonials:
Both of these clients had been unsuccessful in four medical Consultant interviews prior to my coaching:

"With Fiona's help I was transformed from a sweaty, pale rabbit in the headlights interviewee to someone who could actually give a good answer to the questions and look comfortable and confident in the process. She allows you to practice answering questions so that you can safely remove the cloaks of British embarrassment, and finally learn to sing your own praises.

"*Every session with Fiona helped me enormously, and I would thoroughly recommend her to anyone with an important interview coming up.*" Peter

"The interview coaching was structured, made me focussed. The coaching was tailored to my needs and helped to correct my weaknesses. I had a hard time selling myself. You made me focus on selling my skills and abilities effectively.

I was feeling very confident which showed through the whole interview and helped me to secure the job. I would recommend everyone to have interview coaching with you before his or her dream job!" Frances

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Creating your own future success…

We spend a large part of our lives working, so the more enjoyable your work is, the more you will enjoy life! The Art of interview skills will help you think creatively as well as practically to prepare for interviews. So, whether you are a new graduate entering the workplace for the first time, an experienced worker facing redundancy as part of an organisational restructure or thinking of applying for a promotion in your current job; this book will inform and inspire you to shine at interviews.

Fiona Setch

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1 Introduction

"Find a job you like and you add five days to every week"
H. Jackson Brown Jnr.

We spend a large part of our lives working, so the more enjoyable your work is, the more you will enjoy life! The purpose of this book is to help you prepare for that all important interview that will get you the job that you want. Whether you are a new graduate entering the workplace for the first time, an experienced worker facing redundancy as part of an organisational restructure or thinking of applying for a promotion in your current job; this book will inform and inspire you to your future success.

Having had a successful first career in Nursing, I learned a very important lesson;

"Life is an enquiry and then we die "or perhaps you are more familiar with the more common version "Life's a bitch and then you die". I came face to face with this when nursing young adults with life limiting illnesses. Not once did I ever meet someone as they faced the end of their life that said "I wish I had stayed in that job that I didn't enjoy a bit longer…" in her book "The top five regrets of the dying" Bronnie Ware captures the reflections of people at the end of their lives. Their number one regret was:

"I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me".

Realising this helped me to change my career, despite the concerns of friends, colleagues and family, I knew that I wanted to transfer my gifts and talents into Learning and Development.

Working in Staff development: designing training, coaching, mentoring opportunities for people, helping people to enjoy their work enables me to make a contribution in a different way from when I was a nurse. During my working life, I have been interviewed many times for a variety of jobs, I have also sat on Interview panels, run training courses on Interview skills for staff involved with Interviewing and currently one of the most rewarding aspects of my work is inspiring people with confidence, so that they shine at interviews and are successful getting the jobs that they really want!

"Eighty percent of success is showing up"
Woody Allen

1.1 How to get the most from this book

By reading this book, you are giving yourself the gift of time and space to think about what you need to do and prepare for your own future success.

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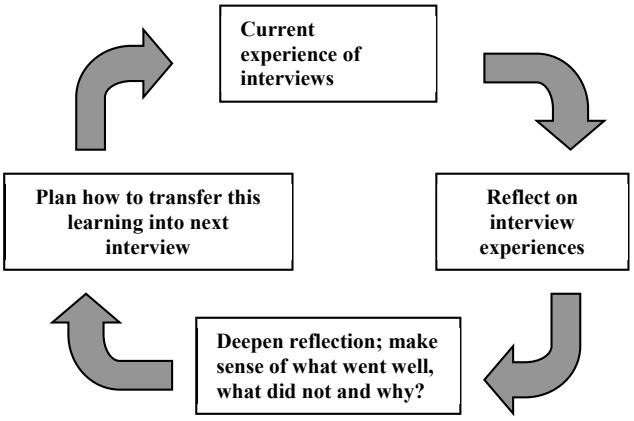
There are several exercises that you can complete to explore the issues that are involved in creating your own future success. The exercises are a great opportunity for you to draw on your previous experiences and integrate any learning that you bring from reflecting on these.

During the book you will be exploring:

- What is your current **experience** of interviews? Feedback that you have received about your performance at interviews and your own personal reflections.
- **Reflecting** on these experiences: what contributed to this experience? How did you prepare, were you last minute.com? How confident were you? Did you research the company sufficiently? The job specification – did you match the criteria?
- **Evaluating** the experience: Deepening your awareness and reflections on your previous experiences. Bringing in additional information such as personal style, any information that can help you make sense of the situation.
- **Plan for next time:** from focusing on your previous experience and what you have learned from working through this learning cycle, you will have started to formulate an action plan of how to approach your next interview.

Learning from your experience


Current experience of interviews
Reflect on interview experiences
Deepen reflection; make sense of what went well, what did not and why?
Plan how to transfer this learning into next interview

1.2 What to have to hand when reading this book

To get the most from the exercises you may find the following useful:

- ✓ Paper or a small ideas book
- ✓ Different coloured pens & highlighter pens
- ✓ Time & space to be open and honest with yourself
- ✓ A friend / colleague who you can discuss issues that may come up for you
- ✓ Your sense of humour

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Paper and coloured pens are useful as life is rarely black and white; you may enjoy highlighting and illuminating your experiences.

One of my favourite films is "Dead Poets Society", in which Robin Williams portrays a teacher who challenges conventional teaching methods. During one scene he asks his students to stand on their desks rather than sitting at them, to view the classroom from a different perspective.

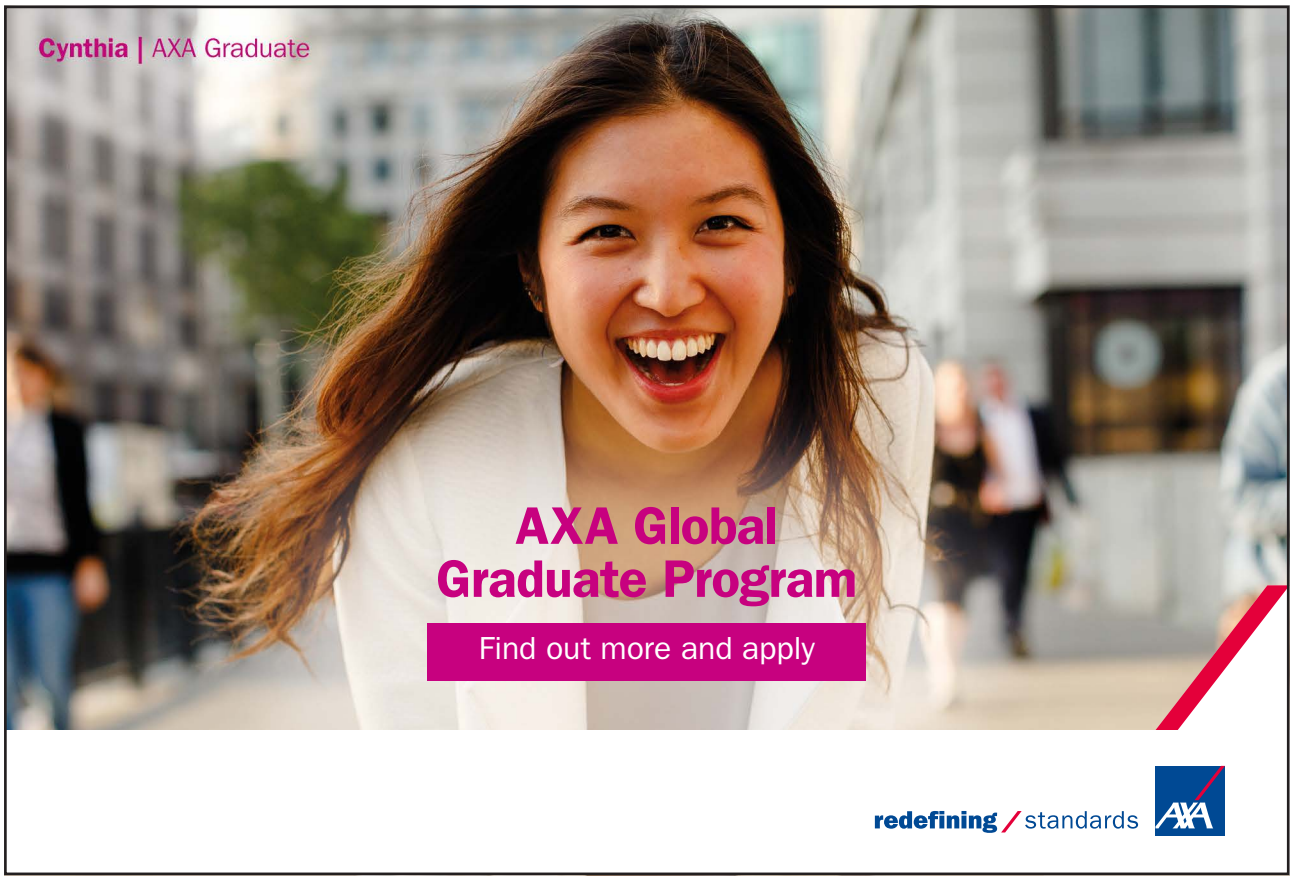
Whilst I am not going to ask you to stand on any furniture I would like to invite you to think about how you can approach interviews differently.

1.4 You get what you focus on.

In life we get what we focus on. So if I ask you to not think of a blue elephant…whatever you do, do not think of a blue elephant…what happens?

I guarantee you will be thinking of a blue elephant, because the way our brains are wired, we have to think about or picture something before we can choose not to think of it…

How is that relevant to you and your interview?



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In my experience, most people focus on everything else but their own success; for example that the other candidates will have more knowledge, that they will not be able to answer the questions in enough depth and the most common worry *"I won't be able to sell myself"*.

Preparation is the main ingredient in interview skills and by working through this book you will be creating a new focus for yourself that will enable you to present yourself with confidence at your next interview!

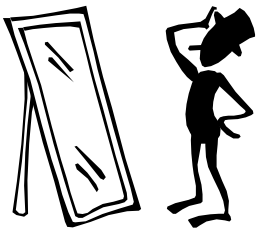
1.5 Where to start?

So in the words of Julie Andrews's character in The Sound of Music:

"*Let's start at the very beginning – it's a really good place to start!*"

Starting Point Exercise

This is a useful exercise to help focus you on what you would like.



1. Take a piece of A4 paper and number it down the left hand side. Number 0–100, in tens; imagine that this is decades of your life.
2. Mark where your current age is and tear off this section up to your age as this is the time that has already passed in your life.
3. Mark off the age when you think you would like to retire.
4. What have you got left?

Look at the remaining paper that you have…

1. What would you like to do with rest of your working life?
2. Why are you not doing it?
3. Where does the job that you are applying for fit into this? Important isn't it, Ok let's get cracking!!

If you would like some more inspiration on this theme I recommend the following TED talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/benjamin_zander_on_music_and_passion

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Starting Point Exercise to get me focused

100

90

80

70

60

50

40

30

20

10

0

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2 Keys to Success

"Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success"
Henry Ford

2.1 Confidence the essential ingredient.

Self confidence is an essential ingredient in the successful recipe for your interview success! What is self confidence? The origin of the word confidence is the Latin word *confidere*, which means to trust or have faith in. So to have self confidence means to approach what you are doing with faith in yourself and your abilities.

One of the most important contributions to your self confidence is the knowledge that you are sufficiently prepared. In his recently published book David Beckham describes how he prepared for a very important free kick in the 92nd minute of a 2001 match against Greece.

"Confidence is a funny thing; people often say that you need luck to win. But for me, confidence comes down to preparation. I took two deep breaths, eyed the corner of the net and emptied my mind of everything else except one thought "I am going to score". There was one focus; there was no doubt in my mind, no negativity, just a sense of complete reassurance".

(David Beckham – The Illustrated Book, 2013)

2.2 Prepare, Prepare, Prepare!

So the preparation was in three key parts:

1. The psychological preparation and choosing the right language "I emptied my mind of everything else except one thought I am going to score, no doubt in my mind"
2. The physical preparation of having practiced hundreds of free kicks during his career, taking two deep breaths, eying the corner of the net
3. The one focus "no doubt in my mind, no negativity, just one thought I am going to score"

This is an effective way of creating the right state and as football history unfolded David Beckham scored that goal in the 92nd minute taking England into the 2001 World Cup.

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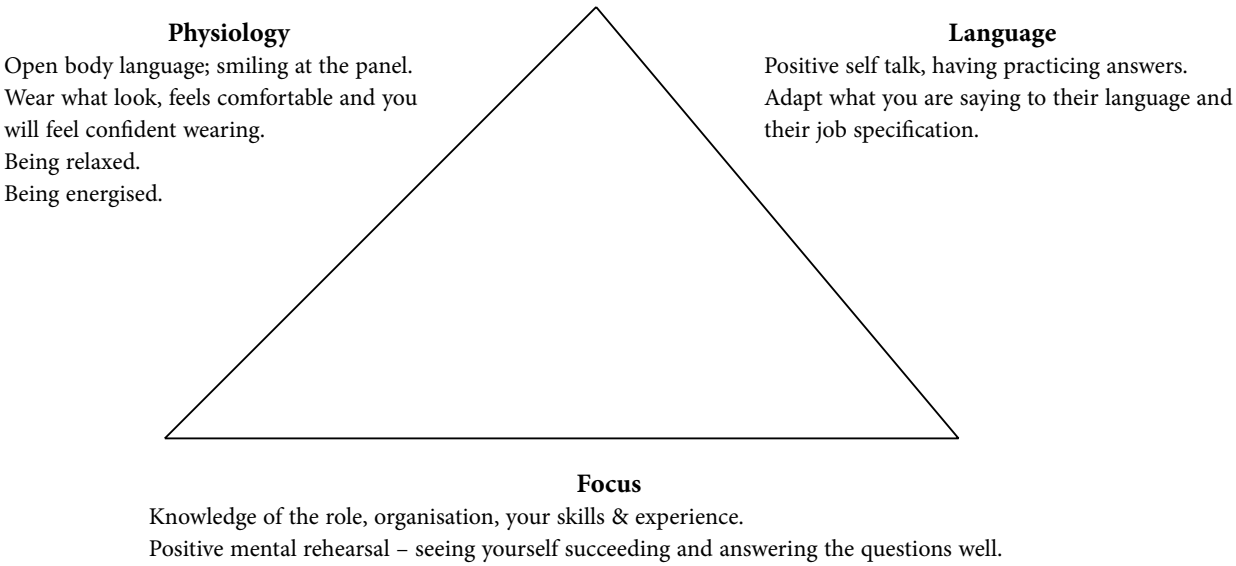
2.3 Creating the right state.

So translating this for your interview:

1. **Choosing the right language**: that you create a positive mantra about being well prepared, are answering the questions with ease and have practiced out loud so you have heard yourself answering questions.
2. **Your physical preparation**: what you are wearing, that you are well hydrated & energised, that your body language is open and you are relaxed, confident and smiling at the interviewing panel.
3. **That you have the right focus**: thorough preparation into the company that you are applying to work with, knowledge of the job from the job description and job specification, applying your experience and skills to match what they are looking for.

Creating the right state and achieving interview success

In this triangular model, having each side of the triangle working together will ensure that you have a really clear strategy on creating your future success.


Physiology
Open body language; smiling at the panel.
Wear what look, feels comfortable and you will feel confident wearing.
Being relaxed.
Being energised.
Language
Positive self talk, having practicing answers.
Adapt what you are saying to their language and their job specification.
Focus
Knowledge of the role, organisation, your skills & experience.
Positive mental rehearsal – seeing yourself succeeding and answering the questions well.

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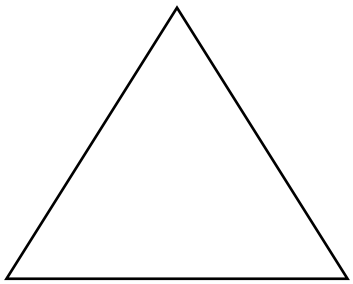
I am not suggesting that you go into your interview roaring like a lion! However how you see yourself at your interview has a big impact on your preparation. Positive mental rehearsal involves seeing yourself at the interview looking and sounding confident, seeing yourself answering the questions well and smiling.

In order to be able to achieve your goal of the successful interview; you need to be working on all three key areas as your preparation.

It may help to label the 3 parts of the blank triangle below to help you focus on this.



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3 Preparing the key ingredients that contribute towards your Interview success

"Pearls do not lie on the sea shore. If you desire one, you must dive for it"
(Oriental proverb)

3.1 How to get an interview with a winning CV

The preparation can begin even before the job is advertised, having an up to date CV is a great starting point for any job application as it focuses you on your experiences.

Tips on creating an effective CV:

- Choose a clear font such as Arial or Times New Roman, size 10 or 12. Bold your headings.
- Ensure your name, address, telephone number and email contact details are at the top of your first page. Think carefully about how your email address, telephone answering message come across as these are a potential employers first impression of you; they should be business like.
- Remember that your potential employer may have received 40–200 applications for one vacancy, so the Interview panel will skim read and match the CV experience with the job specification, so tailoring your CV to the job is essential to ensure you get an interview.
- Two pages as a basic CV with any extra adaptations if required. For example if you have alot of customer care experience that you would like to say more about have an extra page titled Profile of customer care experience.
- Have a positive personal profile and key skills that represent you and your experience.
- Career summary: begin with your most recent work experience first.
- Avoid abbreviations and words that you wouldn't normally use.
- Bullet points are an effective way of highlighting your achievements in work, university or voluntary work.
- Shine a light on your positive qualities, positive people are much more attractive to employers.

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- Make sure you have ensured your dates flow, if you changed jobs and had an extended holiday, make sure to write this down and what you gained from the experience, avoid gaps in dates.
- Write references available on request rather than waste valuable space with names, addresses.
- Beware your spell check as you may end up with the American spelling of words.
- Get a friend, colleague to read through your completed CV.
- Be proud of your CV as it represents all of your personal and professional accomplishments; be prepared to talk about yourself through your CV.

Once you have created your CV, keep it up to date and you can add information that is relevant to a particular role. Make sure you are familiar with everything you have written about and that is a true representation of who you are. At a recent successful interview I was asked to talk through my CV and why I had made the career changes I had. An example of that CV is on the following page.

I joined MITAS because
I wanted **real responsibility**

The Graduate Programme
for Engineers and Geoscientists
www.discovermitas.com

Month 16
I was a construction supervisor in the North Sea advising and helping foremen solve problems
Real work
International opportunities
Three work placements
MAERSK

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3.2 An example of a concise, skills focused CV

Address, Phone number
E-mail, website

Fiona Setch

Profile

A highly motivated, versatile, enthusiastic Professional Coach and Trainer. With twenty one years experience of designing and delivering training and coaching within the Corporate, Voluntary, Public and Education sectors. Passionate about empowering people to work towards their potential. Company Director of successful Coaching and Training business Fiona Setch Training & Coaching for the past twelve years.

Key Skills

Communication skills – Communicating with people at all levels of an organisation; facilitating meetings, delivering presentations and training courses. Gaining rapport with individuals and groups; motivating people within training and acting as a positive role model when working on specific objectives.

Coaching skills – Dynamic coach works to empower the coachee with practical solutions. Highly effective at improving individual and team performance through coaching. Inspires confidence with clients.

Creates a positive learning environment – Whatever the training course, a positive, creative learning environment is established using to ensure a good balance of effective learning as well as an enjoyable experience. Courses and Workshops consistently evaluate well.

Enjoyment of work – Passionate about development opportunities for individuals and assisting people to reach their potential in their roles. This shines through in presentations and is motivating for people attending training courses. Received award for most outstanding student on CIPD Certificate in Training Practice course in 1999.

Diversity of clients – Wide ranges of clients within a variety of working environments: small business owners, medical consultants, senior nursing staff, junior nurses, ancillary staff, hotel services, volunteers, education lecturers, fundraising staff, Nursery staff, policemen, secretarial staff, manufacturing industry, factory workers, first line and senior managers. Work variety includes supervision, inspiring coaching as well as designing and delivering training.

Team working – Works well within a team; supports and inspires colleagues. Experience of working within a local team, national team and a virtual team.

Good Customer Care Skills – Works well with individuals and organisations to achieve the objectives set for the training. Establishes rapport with all levels of people and maintains good working relationships with customers. Regularly asked to perform follow up work.

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Career History

Company Director, Coach & Training Consultant	Fiona Setch Training and Coaching	Nov 2002–Present
Staff Development Officer	Marie Curie Cancer Care Newcastle Centre	Jun 1997–Nov 2002
Planned Career Break	Travelling around the world	Sept 1996–Jun 1997
Training Officer	London Lighthouse	Feb 1993–Sept 1996
Charge Nurse	London Lighthouse, Centre for People affected by HIV / AIDS	Sept 1990–Feb 1993
Staff Nurse, HIV Unit	St Stephen's Hospital, London	Feb 1989–Sept 1990
Assorted Staff Nurse jobs	Newcastle, Saudi Arabia, London	Jul 1985–Feb 1989

Summary of Qualifications

2011	Accredited Fireworks Career Coach
2010	Certificate in Coaching Supervision
2008 - 2009	Post Graduate Certificate in Executive Coaching
2006 – 2007	LeTTOL Certificate in Teaching Online
2005, 2012	Consultant in Myers Briggs Personality Type Indicator Step one and two.
2003 - 2004	Diploma in Life Coaching
2002	Diploma in Business Coaching
2001	ENB RO1 Certificate in Supervisory Skills
2001	Practitioner Certificate in Neuro Linguistic Programming
2000	Certificate in Education
1999	CIPD Certificate in Training Practice
1991	City & Guilds 730 Teaching Adults in Further Education

1982 – 1985 Registered General Nursing, Newcastle

Published work

"Looking after Yourself"; a book chapter in the Palliative Care Nursing textbook "Palliative Nursing, Improving end of life care" (Kinghorn & Gaines 2007)

Articles on 'Team Building', 'Motivating Self', 'Motivating Others' in The Hospital Doctor Newspaper, April 2004
'Interview Skills for Consultants' in ENT & Audiology News, Dec 2010
"The Final Frontier ", a perspectives article. Coaching at Work magazine, July 2011.

Date of Birth
Interests and Activities

24th August 1962, Married
Personal development, reading, cinema, writing, swimming, passionate about the North East of England, I am very proud that I was an Ambassador for Newcastle in 2012 Olympics. Spending time with my family.

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4 Make it easy and get organised!

4.1 Project – Your interview

When the job is advertised, or you locate a role in the local newspaper or on a website. There are a number of things that you can do to ensure you are as prepared as you can be.Occasionally an interview coaching client attends one of my workshops or coaching sessions with a jumbled pile of information, in which somewhere is their CV, application form, job description, company information, an old presentation… The first thing I suggest to them is that they start treating their job searching as a project and get organised! Printing out important information in paper format and filing it in a file that is organised so you can access it with ease. If you enjoy stationary, invest in an A4 file that you will feel inspired to focus on, perhaps in your favourite colour and also some extra wide dividers so you can be organised with the information. For one job application you may have the following headings:

- Copy of Advert, with key words highlighted
- Job description & job specification
- CV adapted for role
- Information about the company
- Copy of application form, covering letter
- A record of any conversations that you may have had with the company or recruitment agency so you are clear about who said what, dates etc.

When you are this organised, if you are unsuccessful at your interview you have all the information to hand when you next need it, which will save you time.

4.2 Further research to assist your interview preparation

Other factors to take into consideration whilst getting yourself organised during your preparation:

- You are likely to be using several different methods of career hunting such as online advertisements, company websites, newspaper adverts and recruitment agency. It is vitally important to keep a record of who you have said what to, applied with.
- When you receive the information, if it is a paper copy, photocopy the application form and put in your project file, so that when you complete it, it is clean. Always photocopy a copy before you send it, so you have an accurate record of what you said.
- Check the details of the time frame of the application and interview process; an online application will require you to plan your time completing your form online, some companies give you up to 90 minutes to complete an online application form before having to access their portal again.
- Find out as much as you can about the organisation, their website, arrange an informal visit if it is possible so you can see for yourself what the environment is like.

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I was once applying for a job as a Nurse Facilitator within an emerging Health Care Company, what I hadn't realised was that my new working environment would be within a Call Centre. The person who I spoke to on the phone about the job assured me that it would not be possible to have an informal visit, so I asked them to describe the working environment and when they described the environment; I was able to make my mind up about applying for the job and save myself a lengthy application process. Sometimes the process of applying for another job can make you appreciate where you are currently working.

4.3 The Informal Visit

If you are applying for a role where this is available, I suggest that you make the effort to attend if possible as this is demonstrating that you are interested in the role. Remember that you are presenting yourself at any informal contact that you make with your potential employer, so be professional.

Tips for an Informal visit:

- If information is available on their company website make sure that you have read about the company first, their general information and if they have a careers section, so that when someone is talking about it, you look and sound interested.
- Dress smartly and professionally.
- Your interview process has started as you walk through the office doors as the person showing you around will have an opinion on the candidates.
- Make sure all electronic items are switched off.
- Smile and listen to what the person talking to you is saying, keep eye contact.
- Accept any information pack / leaflet they have to offer you, even if you have alot of online information. The member of staff will probably have put alot of time and effort into preparing their role facilitating this informal visit.
- Have a positive statement about yourself ready for when asked what you are doing now and why you are seeking this change of job.
- Sit down directly after the informal visit and write down your immediate thoughts, reflections and any concerns that you have from the experience. This will be very useful information when you come to preparing your interview questions.

If an informal visit is not possible, is there anything else you could do?

For example if I was applying for Seasonal work at Marks and Spencer or Tesco I would go to one of the stores and walk around as a potential employee and ask myself "What is unique about this Company and what can I bring that will contribute to that?".

Some large companies have very informative websites with virtual tours and case scenarios of each departments work, extensive career sections.

Check out all aspects and write notes as part of your preparation.

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Take care with your Social Media

Just like you may check out a potential employers website, Facebook or Twitter to see what image and information the company is giving out…look at your own Facebook, Twitter account and other social media that you are using to portray yourself. Employers can also check out social media to see another perspective on their interview candidates.

Whilst speaking at a recent Graduate career fair, I heard some examples of people who had been using their social media to tell their world how much alcohol they enjoyed, that they were having "another sickie thanks to their raging hangover" with choice language and that the offer of that job they had worked so hard for had been rescinded. The job offer "pending references" may also include the informal reference of what you choose to say about yourself in social media.

Think before you write: once you write this about yourself any potential employer can read it and it may cloud their opinion on whether you match their job specification.

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• STUDY A SEMESTER ABROAD AND BECOME A GLOBAL CITIZEN WITH THE BEYOND BORDERS EXPERIENCE
Length: 10 MONTHS
Av. Experience: 1 YEAR
Language: ENGLISH / SPANISH
Format: FULL-TIME
Intakes: SEPT / FEB
5 SPECIALIZATIONS
PERSONALIZE YOUR PROGRAM
#10 WORLDWIDE
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FINANCIAL TIMES
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5 Preparing for your Interview

Having submitted your application form and covering letter / email, you must have presented yourself well as you now have an interview!

If you have organised it as we discussed in Chapter three, you will have everything at hand…so get ready to prepare for your interview!

5.1 The competency based interview

Whether an interview is face to face or telephone, most interviews are competency based.

A competency is a behaviour that you must have or be able to acquire to be effective in the role. The majority of companies will break down each vacancy into a number of core competencies and the interview panel will ask questions that require the candidates to show evidence of demonstrating them.

Some of the most popular competencies are:

- People management
- Communication skills
- Team working skills
- Leadership skills
- Customer care skills
- Problem solving

5.2 The job specification

The job specification provides essential information. The interview panel will want to hear specific examples of how you can demonstrate the skills and abilities that they consider essential for the post.

So if you prepare by starting with the key competencies / skills that are required for the job, which you will find on the Job specification.

Required Skills from the job specification	Your Actual Experience

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5.3 Matching your skills to the job requirements

Required Skills from the job specification	Your Actual Experience
People management	• Leading team meetings and helping staff on induction • Leading team discussions
Leadership skills	• Clear communication • Motivating colleagues • Organisational skills • Enthusiastic about work
Communication skills	• Specific example of where you have enhanced communication such as listening to a colleague • Writing a leaflet • Chairing a meeting and ensuring the minutes clear to read
Team working skills	• Helping colleagues with tasks • Assisting staff to agree to disagree • Enthusiastic about role, company and customers
Customer care skills	• An example e.g. particular telephone call that clarified the situation for the customer • Having good rapport with customer • Good listening skills • Some feedback that you have received
Problem solving	• Listening to the situation and providing several possible solutions • Thinking creatively about the problem • Have a positive example of a time you solved a problem
	Try and have three examples of each competency prepared which will ensure you have a very thorough approach.

Table 1: An example of the skills required and your skills which provides the evidence for your answers.

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5.4 Why this approach works

When you prepare in this way, with the detail of specific examples that evidence / illuminate your knowledge and experience, you will have prepared for the key questions that they will be asking you.

Such as:

Q: Tell us what are the key skills that you think are important for this role?

A: Highlight the competencies / skills that they have asked for with your specific examples that demonstrate this.

Q: Give an example of a time when you have assisted a team member.

A: This is asking you about team working & people management skills; however you can also weave in effective communication skills and problem solving skills.

Q: Can you tell us how you demonstrate good customer care skills?

A: This is asking about your skills with customers, also about how you would represent the organisation, department. You can answer this generally and also use an example of good customer care that you will have prepared. Some positive feedback you have received from a customer also underlines your customer care skills well.

"I studied English for 16 years but... ...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"
Jane, Chinese architect
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Q: We are looking for someone who works well under pressure; can you tell us how you would demonstrate this?

A: This is looking for your organisational skills, time management and some positive examples of how you work under pressure – have some examples prepared. Also an opportunity to talk about the day to day things that you do to relax: reading, sport, time with family.

Q: Tell us about your strengths.

A: Talk about the things that you really enjoy and know that you are good at remembering to include at least two of the skills that they are looking for from the job specification. If you have an example that illuminates these skills such as

"One of my skills is that I enjoy providing positive leadership to people, for example when we were planning a team building event I enjoyed making sure that everybody had a chance to contribute. I also make sure that I give challenging aswell as positive feedback to my team".

Q: Can you tell us about your weaknesses.

A: The key to this type of question is to talk about something that you have improved on, an area of weakness that you are/ or have transformed / are working on such as "One of my weaknesses is that I have very high and exacting standards and I can get disappointed when other people do not contribute as fully as I do; I have realised that not everyone is as enthusiastic as me and that I need to be aware of my colleagues other areas of expertise." Or "I am aware that in the past I have overcommitted myself and have had feedback that my time management could be improved; I have worked hard on being more assertive and prioritising my workload and am pleased that this area is much more focused now".

Don't be too hard on yourself in this question and don't go for the worst feedback that you have ever received; choose something that you can feel positive about and that is the way you will come across to the panel.

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6 Allowing yourself to shine!

6.1 A common mistake that leads to an unsuccessful interview

One of the most common elements of feedback given to unsuccessful candidates is that they *"didn't sell themselves as well as the successful candidate"*.

I worked with a Medical client who felt very uncomfortable with the concept of *"selling himself"*; he felt he sounded arrogant and boastful about himself, which in turn made him very negative about how he answered the interview questions.Thinking back to the triangle of Creating the Right State, he did not have the right focus by this negativity; so when we reframed his language to a different metaphor, this meant something to him and his work and refocused him.

6.1 Changing the focus to feel more comfortable

So instead of thinking about "selling himself" he said he felt more comfortable with *"allowing himself to shine"* and that he was just imparting information to the interview panel about what he did every day for his patients. By doing this his focus shifted to a more positive outcome and he was delighted when he was successful at his next interview.

6.2 The internal candidate – make no assumptions

This is especially important if you are an internal candidate for a job within the organisation you already work in. Make no assumptions that the panel will know how you work, prepare as you would for an interview in a company you don't know.

Q: Tell us about your career history and why you are applying for this role.
A: *"Well as you know from my CV and work here, I have all the skills that you are looking for"*.

Sitting on the interview panel I would be thinking: Which part of your CV or role…. I can't remember those details; you are the fourth person I have interviewed today. That answer does not allow me to tick any competencies on my interview panel answer sheet, so reluctantly (as I know you and what you are capable of) you have left me no choice but to tick has not met the required standard. A more suitable answer to the same question would be:

A: "Having left University with a degree in Communication Skills, I have enjoyed working within the Customer Services department here for the past two year. I think that I have gained knowledge and experience with handling problems within the Customer Service department and also working as a shift supervisor for the past six months, I have gained some insight into the problems that staff and customers face. I enjoy working for this company and would welcome the opportunity this new position would offer me".

This answer gives me the information about your professional background, that you enjoy working for this company, have some people management experience and are enthusiastic about your work.

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7 Fine Tuning

"I want to put a ding in the Universe"
Steve Jobs.

7.1 Putting a ding in the Universe

There is such a difference in writing things down and saying them out loud. Getting focused on answering questions out loud will really help you in how you come across at your interview.

Try saying out loud this inspiring quote from the co-founder of Apple Steve Jobs. I find it almost impossible not to smile when I am saying these words. This is how you need to be when presenting yourself at your interview, answering questions with enthusiasm. You getting this job can contribute to that ding in the universe!

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7.2 A presentation at an interview is a great opportunity and your first question

If you are asked to prepare a presentation as part of your interview, this is a great opportunity as it is in effect your first question! Make sure that you practice delivering your presentation out loud and that it is within the time that they have asked you; so if it is a ten minute presentation, deliver a nine minute, thirty seconds presentation.

Whilst delivering your presentation at the interview, the panel is also looking at:

- How you cope under pressure
- Your organisational skills and time management: for example if you say that you are a concise communicator with good time management and your presentation overruns by ten minutes, this does not indicate that you are effective with time management.
- Your leadership skills: are you enthusiastic about your topic or have you sent them to sleep by death by power point?
- Good communication skills: your audiovisual aids: handout
- Getting your message across

7.2 Interview Stress – can you avoid it?

No you can't, interview stress is a necessary part of the interview preparation process. What is important is to use the energy that comes out of a stressful situation to your advantage. When working with my interview skills clients I encourage them to transform their interview nerves into creative apprehension.

7.3 False Evidence Appearing Real

One of the things that happens to us is we get fearful and start worrying about what may happen at the interview. I would like to suggest that if you break the word fear down into the acronym this can serve as an interruption to your negative pattern.

F alse
E vidence
A ppearing
R eal

Where is the evidence that you won't perform at the interview? Our brain searches for evidence that we won't do well. 95% of the things we worry about never happen, however it appears real, when it is false. So if this happens at your next interview, think to yourself; *"It's just false evidence appearing real, I am prepared, organised and I have practiced my answers out loud – my Interview Bring it on"!*

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7.4 Creating your own future history: Positive mental rehearsal

When Mohamed Ali prepared for his fights, he used his own unique form of mental preparation that he called creating your own, future history. By visualising his success with such detail, clarity and focus, he could predict accurately when his opponent was "going down" after his knockout punch. It was a very successful strategy and it worked for him fourteen out of his seventeen title fights. When asked about the three that he lost he said

"*I guess on those occasions, my opponent had created a better future history than me*".

This type of preparation is called positive mental rehearsal, where you visualise yourself in the interview answering the questions well, your presentation was very well received, your answers are flowing.

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7.5 Beware of Imposter Syndrome

Imposter Syndrome is a term described by Clinical Psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes in 1978. Sometimes called Imposter Phenomenon in which people are unable to internalise their accomplishments. People with Imposter Syndrome remain convinced that they are frauds and do not deserve the success they have achieved. Any proof of success is dismissed as luck, or timing "I was just in the right place at the right time" or as a result of deceiving others into thinking they are more intelligent and competent than they believe themselves to be despite external evidence.

Originally thought to be particularly common among women who are successful in their careers, it has since been shown to be equally common in men.

Quotes from people to illustrate Imposter Syndrome include:

"I have offended God and mankind because my work didn't reach the quality it should have"
Leonardo da Vinci.

"At anytime, I still expect that the no-talent police will come and arrest me"
Mike Myers

"I have written 11 books, but each time I think…uh oh they are going to find me out now"
Maya Angelou

"I would wake up in the morning before going to a shoot, and think, I can't do this, I'm a fraud"
Kate Winslet

So having prepared so thoroughly for this interview, you are going to have a two sided conversation, answer some questions that you have thought about and are able to share with the panel your experience, knowledge and skills and how you will be able to contribute to their team, project, organisation.

You are in the right place at the right time and ready for your interview!

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8 At the interview

8.1 Enjoy your interview

The first 90 seconds of the interview are crucial, so practice introducing yourself positively, using open body language, smiling and giving the whole panel eye contact.

If you have a presentation deliver it well, with enthusiasm and enjoy your first question of the interview.

Enjoy your interview and have a positive closing statement.

8.2 Any questions?

Here are some examples of questions that you can ask an interview panel.

- Can you tell me about the potential career progression within this position?
- How do you see this role developing over the next 6 months?
- What type of induction will I receive?
- What is the timescale for appointments to this role?

Thank the panel at the end of the interview and smile saying that you welcome the opportunity to contribute your skills and experience to this team. A positive ending to the interview demonstrates that you would be a valued member of their staff.

8.3 Reflect on your interview

After the interview reflect on your experience, perhaps using the Reflective learning cycle from chapter one.

If you are successful, enjoy celebrating your new job!

If you are not successful on this occasion, make sure that you get feedback on your interview and build from that feedback into your personal reflection on this interview, most importantly, how can you transfer this learning back into your next experience.

You may like to engage a coach to help you with your interview technique, I happen to know a good one who will help you with the art of interview skills to create your own future success!

http://www.fionasetch.co.uk

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